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RURAL AREAS DEVELOPMENT

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Newsletter

RURAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE SEEKS "NEW DIMENSION" FOR RURAL AMERICA

Members of the President's Rural Development Committee called for an all-out push to help local people develop a "new dimension" in rural America at their organizational meeting.

The six Cabinet officers and two independent agency administrators represented at the November 7 meeting also pledged to use the full resources of their agencies in this push.

This financial and technical help will be presented in a coordinated package, tying in all Federal agencies, the Committee decided.

The Committee, established October 16, consists of the Secretaries of Agriculture; Commerce; Health, Education, and Welfare; Interior; Labor, and Treasury, and the administrators of Housing and Home Finance Agency and Small Business Administration.

Secretary of Agriculture Orville L. Freeman was made Committee chairman.

Officially, the executive order directed Committee members to coordinate all of their programs which rural people are using to revitalize their economy, and to provide the agencies involved in this work with "uniform policy guidance." The executive order also directed the Secretaries of Agriculture and Commerce to coordinate the RAD and Area Redevelopment Administration (ARA) programs.



What does all of this mean to local RAD leaders and to USDA field personnel?

For one thing, it will lead to close working arrangements between USDA field people and field representatives of other Federal agencies. It also will put USDA people in close touch with the people that these other Government agencies work with, particularly State personnel.



Assistant Secretary of Agriculture John A. Baker summed it up when he told a newscaster:

"The new Committee, hopefully, will provide the means and mechanism whereby the appropriate response of Federal resources, technical assistance, loans, cost-sharing, and educational efforts, will be more usefully and more effectively made available to local RAD committees."

VERMONT GOVERNOR CREATES STATE RURAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

¶ The Federal government was not alone in establishing a rural development committee. Governor Philip Hoff of Vermont also issued an executive order (Oct. 11) establishing a Rural Stabilization and Adjustment Committee to cope with the problems of rural decline.

Abandoned farms and the steady migration of farm people to urban areas have become "major problems" in Vermont, the Governor said. The Committee will help marginal farmers develop and improve their operations, and assist people involuntarily forced off farms to adjust to their new life. State assistance will include help in locating adequate housing, employment, and school enrollment.

James A. Wood, Office of Rural Areas Development field representative for the northeast, is a member of the Governor's committee.

WATERSHED PROJECT BRINGS A BRIGHT NEW FUTURE

¶ With downtown cash registers ringing at a record clip, new subdivisions going up, and industries planning multi-million dollar expansions, it's hard to believe that Duncan, Oklahoma faced an uncertain future a few years ago.

The problems were periodic floods, followed by water shortages.



In the spring, floods roared down Wildhorse Creek, destroying millions of dollars of oilfield equipment, ripping up roads and bridges, and washing fertile top soil from cotton and wheat fields and overgrazed ranchlands.

In the summer, when the rains stopped, drought gripped the land, and Duncan's main water reservoir would drop dangerously low. At the height of the 1955 drought, the town had less than two days' water supply.

It took the combined forces of the people of Duncan, and area farmers, ranchers, and oilfield owners to tame Wildhorse. The Stephens County Soil Conservation District already had been working on a flood prevention plan to protect the oilfields and farm and ranchland. When the people of Duncan became a co-sponsor of the project, the plan was expanded to provide water storage for the town and to protect a larger area.

The cost to the people of Duncan was \$2.5 million, including the land, enlargement of a dam, and the building of a new water plant and new mains. Duncan voters approved a bond issue to finance the local costs by a 13-1 margin.

With the flooding and water shortage problems solved, Duncan's industrial plants began expanding. Refineries already have spent more than \$2.5 million to improve their operations, and the city's largest employer, an oilfield service company, has announced plans for a \$6.5 million expansion.



Bank deposits and personal savings are up, and housing construction is at a high level. Agricultural income has increased \$1 million a year because of flood protection, irrigation, and soil conservation measures associated with the watershed project.

Cash registers in Duncan chalked up retail sales of \$42 million last year--the seventh highest in the State, though Duncan is 16th in population with a little over 20,000 people.

Recreation has become an important byproduct of the four municipal water reservoirs, the latest of which was completed in fiscal 1963. At one reservoir, 150 lots have been leased to individuals who have built cabins and homes, or brought in house trailers. Fishing, duck hunting, boating, picnicking and other recreational use of the reservoir add about \$20,000 a year to the city treasury. More than 100 private fishing barges dot the reservoir.

But best of all, the reservoirs provide Duncan with enough water to grow. They could meet the needs of a city twice Duncan's size.

NEW RC&D PROJECT APPROVED

Secretary of Agriculture Orville L. Freeman has approved the nation's third Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) project, which will generate "new jobs, new recreation areas, and increase rural income" in three Minnesota counties.

Local people in Kandiyohi, Pope, and Swift Counties requested the project and will carry out the work, with the help of long-term, low-interest credit from USDA and other Federal agencies.

Plans include:

- ... Development of 10 multi-purpose watershed projects
- ... Conversion of marginal cropland to pasture and outdoor recreation use
- ... Enhancement of the industrial potential
- ... Purchase of 50,000 acres of wetlands and construction of control dams to improve wildlife habitat, particularly for duck hunting.



NEW DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY IN RAD FIELD

■ Dr. Alfred L. Edwards, Michigan State University economist, has been named a Deputy Assistant Secretary to work "across the board" with Assistant Secretary of Agriculture John A. Baker in Rural Areas Development.

A 43-year-old native of Key West, Florida, Dr. Edwards was an economic adviser to the University of Nigeria, in West Africa, before joining the Michigan State staff. Before that, he was with Universities in Louisiana and Iowa.

WHAT'S RAD? WHY THAT'S A WATER ASSOCIATION IN NEW MEXICO!



■ Folks outside Tucumcari, New Mexico like RAD so much they've chosen that name for their non-profit water association.

The water association was proposed by the Quay County Rural Areas Development Committee to serve families living east of Tucumcari. At the organizational meeting, members voted to submit a loan application to the Farmers Home Administration and to adopt the name "RAD Water Association."

The association plans to buy water from the city of Tucumcari and have it delivered to a master meter at the city limits.

STATE DEPARTMENTS OF AGRICULTURE ENDORSE RAD

■ State Secretaries and Commissioners of Agriculture and other members of the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture have volunteered their services as consultants and technical advisers to RAD.

A resolution adopted by Association members during their convention at Winston-Salem, North Carolina, says that "whenever feasible, the State Department of Agriculture shall be ready to serve as consultants and technical advisers to those responsible for the RAD program in its State and, when desirable, render services in the direction and operation of such programs as the State Department of Agriculture is best staffed and equipped (to serve)"

IF YOU ARE THINKING OF DEVELOPING A RECREATION AREA

■ The Department of Agriculture has issued a new booklet for rural landowners who are thinking of entering the recreation business. It's a complete wrap-up in one publication, of many points you should consider from types of enterprises, to financing, labor requirements, market potential, insurance, vandalism, etc. If you would like a copy of "Rural Recreation Enterprises for Profit -- AIB 277" write: Joseph T. McDavid, Editor, Rural Areas Development Newsletter, Office of Information, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. 20250.

